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Laundry Day

by IChallengeMyFate (Ealdremen)

Summary

Putting off doing laundry is probably a bad idea, but Robin does it anyway. Over and over again.

Notes

AUs that change the setting are not really what I normally write, but this idea wouldn't get out of my head. It's just a fun modern AU (though hopefully still not too displaced from the game's canon) for me to work on in between other things. I'm not really sure when I'll update this, but I have a few ideas for how it'll continue. Stay tuned?

Cards and Coins

For all she had scoured the city for an affordable apartment that had washing machines in the complex, Robin definitely put off doing her laundry far more than was necessary.

Most of the time, it wasn't too conscious. She would have a long day at work the same day she planned on doing laundry, and she had clean clothes to wear, still, so it wasn't like putting it off for another day would hurt her *too* badly. Then when the weekend rolled around, she could afford to slum around in sweatpants and a t-shirt – appearances only mattered on weekends if it was a date, after all. When it came down to wearing a sweater that had *only* one stain on it or an old shirt that she found crumpled beneath her bed, that was usually a sign she had waited too long.

She slammed the laundry hamper on top of the washer with a sigh. “Robin, why do you do this to yourself?”

Now she had more clothes than usual to sort through, lengthening this annoying process by just that much. At least there was no one around to see her in her disheveled state – it was early in the morning on a holiday. Everyone except her was probably fast asleep still.

As she separated out the lights from the darks, she noticed a small black wallet on the ground by the machine. Frowning, she bent down and picked it up. People often left things behind in the laundry room, but she'd only ever seen orphaned socks and stray undergarments. Leaving behind a wallet was... especially careless.

Much like putting off laundry until she had no more clean clothes.

Robin glanced around, but the room was empty. She flipped the wallet open and started flicking through its contents. Credit card, debit card, unlabeled gift card... a few small bills and some change...

“No license..?” Robin wondered aloud, furrowing her brow.

The name on the cards wasn't familiar to her, either. She'd have to bring it by the landlord's office. The very idea made her frown deepen. Ever since the mess-up with the utilities bill, the “relationship” she had with the landlord was... strained, to say the least. He brought prospective tenants to her apartment *far* too often for it to just be anything other than an intentional disruption, and he hounded her for rent before it was due, holding the threat of eviction over her head. Hardly a wonder that former tenants' scathing reviews of him regarded him as something of a “mad king” over the complex.

The door to the room opened with an audible squeak. Robin turned, wallet still in hand. A young woman with long blue hair stood in the doorway. Her eye – the left one was hidden by her bangs – scanned Robin briefly, landing on the wallet in her hands. Though she was definitely better put together than Robin was today – her clothes actually looked clean, for one – there was no denying the dissipating panic that seemed to come from her as she noticed the wallet.

“Pardon me – did you find that here?” she asked.

Robin nodded. “Lucina, then?”

She stared at her with an expression Robin couldn't quite place – it almost seemed suspicious. “How did you–? Have we met before?”

Robin chuckled and waved the wallet. “No, it was just the name on the cards. I was going to bring

it to the landlord."

The momentary flicker of disgust on Lucina's face told Robin that she wasn't the only one who hated Gangrel. She smiled and held out the wallet. Lucina approached, her steps almost striking Robin as hesitant, and she took the wallet while basically arm's length from Robin.

"To make things fair," Robin added, hoping to ease her discomfort, "I'm Robin. I live in 308."

She offered Lucina what she hoped was an encouraging smile. Lucina didn't quite return the gesture, but she *did* seem less wary of her. That was something, at least.

"I see," said Lucina with a slow nod. "Well, thank you for keeping this safe. You saved me quite a bit of trouble."

Robin shrugged. "If you kept a license or something with a phone number in there, you might save yourself some trouble next time you misplace it. It's easier for the police – or whoever finds the wallet – to track down someone if they're not just going by a name."

"Of course. That *is* a good idea." The way Lucina said it made Robin think that it was something she had considered before. She slipped her wallet into her jeans' pocket. "Though I'd hope there isn't a next time in losing my wallet..."

Robin could've slapped herself for implying Lucina was forgetful enough that this would be a common occurrence. "Well, you... never know," she continued lamely. "Doesn't hurt to be too prepared."

At this, Lucina smiled slightly. "I agree. Thank you again."

She turned to leave, her shoes squeaking on the laundry room's floor. The door opened, and Lucina left without another word. Robin scratched the back of her neck and looked down at herself. Baggy black-and-purple sweater that probably had a coffee stain somewhere on it, an even baggier white t-shirt that was long enough to hang out from under the sweater, and unflattering tan sweatpants that covered part of her shoes. She sighed as she turned back to her laundry.

Of *course* she would have to interact with someone on the day she had nothing better to wear.

Back Again

Chapter Summary

Another chance meeting -- it seems laundry is good for bringing people together.

“Strange that we'd meet here again so soon.” Robin, in the middle of folding a white shirt, looked over her shoulder at the familiar voice. “...Raven, right?”

Lucina stood in the doorway of the laundry room, her expression neutral. Robin made a silent prayer of thanks to whatever god had convinced her to look presentable today when she did laundry – no wrinkles on her plain shirt and black slacks, no disheveled hair going in every direction, and absolutely no chance of errant coffee stains that she hadn't noticed. She set the shirt down and moved onto the next one.

“Wrong bird – I'm Robin. But yeah, I'm still here doing laundry.” When Lucina looked at her with confusion, Robin added, “Just... a joke.”

“Ah, right.”

Returning to her laundry, Robin barely registered Lucina walking past the table Robin was using to fold her clothes. It wasn't until she heard one of the washers' lids open and what sounded like a mumbled curse from Lucina that Robin looked over. It was an awfully murderous look for someone looking into a washing machine.

“Are you alright?” Robin asked.

“The washer broke,” Lucina explained with a sour glare at the offending machine.

When Lucina pulled a blue turtleneck sweater out from the stuck mass of clothes, it dripped with detergent-saturated water. For emphasis, she wrung the sleeve between her hands, and more spilled into the murky lake of the washer.

Robin glanced to the far end of the wall and started mentally counting off the machines. One, two, three – finally landing on where Lucina was standing: The fourth one from the left. That was the one that had broken on her a few months ago, leaving her with soaked clothes and a migraine. Apparently the landlord hadn't seen fit to replace it.

Robin wrinkled her nose and rolled her eyes. “You'd think with how steep rent is, the landlord could afford better machines. Just what is he spending all that money on?”

She reached into her pocket. It jingled with the sound of coins clinking together, almost like the pockets of one of her workplace's supervisors. Lucina didn't look back to her until Robin cleared her throat loudly. Coins in her palm, Robin held out her hand. Lucina stared at her, brow slightly furrowed.

“It's going to take more than one cycle to dry that off,” said Robin, nodding to the change. “Take it.”

“Oh, you don't have to do that,” said Lucina with a brisk shake of her head.

Robin shrugged, and the coins jangled together from the movement. “I can afford giving someone a bit of change. Besides, we're basically friends now.”

“Er...” The creases on her forehead deepened, as though Lucina were trying to figure out what she was trying to say. Did she suspect she had an ulterior motive? Robin outstretched her hand again.

“We've talked all of two times now. I'd consider that a solid basis for a friendship.” Robin laughed lightly, but at Lucina's blank stare, the chuckle died and she just barely managed to suppress a sigh. “Another joke.”

Lucina seemed to almost shrink at that, her shoulders drooping and her eyes avoiding Robin's own. “Sorry...”

Perhaps now ashamed of missing the joke twice in a row now, Lucina approached and shyly took the coins from Robin. With even more visible reluctance, Lucina returned to the washer and began pulling her clothes out of the washer and wringing them out before dropping them into a laundry basket. Briefly, she considered offering to help further, but Lucina had already been hesitant to accept a tiny bit of charity. Mentally shrugging, Robin returned to organizing her clothes. She should have been done by now, but she really couldn't leave until she was sure she had everything – and this *one* sock's twin was missing... Maybe it had gotten stuck inside a shirt..?

“...That makes two times I owe you a favor, I suppose – is there anything I can do for you?” Lucina's voice jarred Robin out of her sock-seeking trance. She was standing at a dryer adjacent to the table Robin was using to organize her clothes. The basket that held Lucina's clothes was dripping with water – it definitely was going to take a lot to dry them.

Robin chuckled and lifted a pair of trousers, reaching into its leg. With a triumphant grin, she tugged the sock out. “A date, maybe – I hear this laundry room's great for that,” she said aimlessly.

“Alright.”

Robin's hands fell slack at the sincerity in Lucina's tone. She looked back to Lucina, who was loading Robin's coins into the dryer instead of looking at Robin herself. After waiting a beat, Robin found her voice and self-consciously cleared her throat.

“T-That was a joke,” Robin stammered, feeling her cheeks flush.

This time, when she looked over her shoulder, Lucina had a small, proud smile on her face. “I realized.”

Every muscle in Robin's body seemed to clench up, and she struggled a few times to get a response out before managing an actual noise.

“Ha!” The forced bark of laughter made Lucina flinch and made Robin mentally cringe. “And here I thought you'd never get my jokes.”

As she listened to the words spill from her mouth, crawling into that broken washer and closing the lid seemed like a very appealing idea. The pained grin on her face couldn't have been more artificial, her body language more tense, the situation she had landed herself in anymore awkward.

“Perhaps that saying about the third time being the charm is true,” said Lucina as the last coin clinked into the machine.

If she had noticed Robin's discomfort, she didn't show it, instead starting to methodically sort out the soaked clothes. The smile had returned to her face, but it didn't look to be condescending or

making a mockery of Robin's mistake. Whatever was behind that smile made Robin's heart quicken.

Robin felt her thoughts drift back to the other day when she told her friends about the odd encounter in the laundry room. While Chrom had thought little of the story's weirdness, he *had* thought it was a waste she hadn't taken the chance to get to know this Lucina better... What was it he had said about fate and coincidental meetings? Invisible binds tying certain people together..?

Although she was finding it hard to swallow now, Robin cleared her throat again. Lucina looked over questioningly.

“Actually... uh... if you're free this Saturday, maybe it wasn't a joke..?” Robin hazarded.

She offered up a hopefully non-threatening and more natural-looking smile, silently praying that her cheeks weren't as red as they felt.

Lucina paused. The shirt she was holding started to pool water near her feet as she seemed to think it over. “...A better location than a laundromat, I hope?”

Robin's responding laugh was less forced but no less nervous. “I think I know a *few* better places. Should I, uh... well, what time works for you?”

“Noon would work,” answered Lucina, that small smile returning.

Robin gripped the sides of the laundry hamper and lifted it off the table. “Alright, I'll just swing by your place on Saturday, then. If anything comes up, just – drop by 308 and leave a note on the door if I'm not there. If not, I'll see you on Saturday?”

She was babbling now, but Lucina didn't appear to be bothered by it. She only nodded.

“I'll look forward to it,” said Lucina, and even if it was just polite conversation filler, Robin didn't care.

As she bade Lucina a quick farewell and “see you later,” she couldn't keep the grin off her face once she had stepped out into the hall of the apartment complex. She rested the hamper against the wall and pulled her phone out of her pocket, scrolling quickly through her contacts. Once the ringer sounded, Robin continued to walk away from the laundry room, the hamper under her arm and her phone to her ear.

“Hello?” came Chrom's voice from the phone just as she reached the elevator.

“Hey – you got a minute?” Robin asked, her words jumbled together.

“Yeah... Are you alright? You sound kind of...” He trailed off, probably unsure of how to describe it without being insulting.

Robin grinned and pushed the up button. It dinged, apparently having already been on the floor, and she entered into the empty elevator. Leaning against the wall, her legs feeling rather weak all of a sudden, Robin continued breathlessly.

“You won't *believe* what just happened...”

Another Time

Chapter Summary

Robin's date with Lucina doesn't go quite as planned.

A sharp knock on the door woke Robin from her impromptu nap on the floor. With a groan, she pushed herself to her feet, a little unsteady. Already she could hear Chrom teasing her about her apparent tendency to nap in odd places. She stumbled over various discarded clothes on the ground and piles of laundry she was *definitely* going to put away eventually but had just been too busy to.

With a sleepy yawn, she pulled open the door just enough to see who it was. On the other side was Lucina, her raised hand falling to her side. She looked almost surprised.

“Oh, er–” Lucina looked her over. “I apologize. I realized that I had neglected to tell you *where* I lived, so I came by myself... Am I too early..?”

Robin glanced at the clock on the microwave. It was nearly noon. Leave it to her to mess up this badly on the first date she had gotten in Naga knows how long.

“No, I just... fell asleep. Long week,” she finished lamely. Robin pulled the door open a bit wider and gestured for Lucina to enter. “You may as well wait in here.”

Cautiously, Lucina stepped inside, her tentative footsteps almost sounding loud as thunder to Robin's ears. Once Lucina was inside, Robin closed the door and walked behind her to where she had previously fallen asleep by the couch. She scooped up the laundry into her arms, glaring at the faint human-shaped imprint in the carpet. Not only was it too late to make herself seem presentable before meeting up with Lucina, but now her apartment reflected that, too. She watched Lucina tentatively stand still near the doorway, glancing around. Robin could only hope that it was more out of curiosity than critical judgment. She cleared her throat, and Lucina snapped to attention.

“You can sit down if you want. I shouldn't be long, but...” Robin shrugged and uneasily smiled. “Make yourself at home?”

At this, Lucina's hesitation seemed to give way to a similar awkward contentment, and she nodded. “Thank you.”

Robin barely suppressed her sigh of relief as Lucina sat down on the couch. If she had been going to bail, she probably would've done it at seeing the state of things. Maybe. Robin muttered that she'd be back and hurried back towards her bedroom, unceremoniously dumping the clothes onto her unmade bed and quickly turning to her remaining clean clothes.

It was more of a disaster than Lucina probably realized. Robin had intended to do laundry before meeting up with Lucina, but her apparent nap – which she had *no* recollection of even starting, something else Chrom would likely find hilarious, concerning, or both – now limited her clothing options to whatever she hadn't already worn this week. This wasn't an extravagant date by any means – it wasn't like Robin had been planning on dressing up like she was going to one of Naga's temples or one of Maribelle's well-to-do parties, but first impressions were important, and wearing a “technically clean” shirt didn't exactly scream ideal date...

Then again, Lucina's actual first impression of Robin had been a coffee-stained mess in the laundry room.

Robin leaned her head against the wall, an exasperated sigh escaping her. “Way to go, Robin.”

What had Lucina even been wearing? Robin tried to think back, realizing too late that she hadn't been paying much attention. There had been a blue jacket, but that didn't really mean anything. The thrum of rain outside was reason enough to put on a nice jacket....

Behind her, her phone buzzed. She snatched it off her bedside table and looked at the screen. A text from Gaius.

I heard you have a date today good luck and dont blow your top

Frowning, Robin typed back.

What do you mean?

The response came back uncharacteristically quick, so he was probably slacking off at work again – stealing time in addition to bites of candy from the sweets shop he worked at, probably. Already she could imagine Gaius with his phone in the corner near the pastries, a blind spot in the security cameras he had once pointed out to her, as he typed out the succinct explanation:

You always overdo things like this

Robin paused, rereading the message again. He did have a point. She glanced back to her closet, and with this newer outlook, her options didn't seem exactly so limited.

Thanks. I needed that.

Gaius' next text came back a little slower – maybe a customer had come into the shop and it was harder to hide what he was doing now. But still, there it was:

Anytime Bubbles

Robin put her phone back down and returned to the closet, tugging off the black-and-purple sweater from a hanger. She pulled it on and quickly swapped her sweatpants for khakis. Briefly, she wondered if that was overdoing it, but she shook it off. A sweater automatically voided any “trying too hard” vibes that khaki pants could present. After checking her hair in the mirror and judging that she looked surprisingly good for someone who had just been sleeping on the floor not even fifteen minutes before, Robin returned to where Lucina was waiting. She glanced over.

“Oh, that was quicker than I thought you'd be,” Lucina commented, rising. She adjusted the cushion that had fallen slightly out of place from the movement.

“...Did I really look that bad?” Robin, her brow furrowed, glanced down at herself.

“Ah, no, I didn't...” Lucina's frantic apology was cut short by Robin's growing grin. “...That was a joke, wasn't it?”

“You're learning,” said Robin approvingly. She took hold of the umbrella resting by the door. “Alright, so – have you ever been to that little coffee shop a few blocks down from here? The one with a dragon on its sign?”

“No,” said Lucina. “I'm afraid I haven't had much time to spare as of late, so I don't go out much.”

“Busy with work?” Robin asked as she pulled open the door.

Lucina shifted and had a peculiar expression Robin couldn't place – was she avoiding eye contact? “Something of the sort.”

“Well, anyways,” said Robin, gesturing for Lucina to walk out before her with a sweep of the umbrella, “that makes it easy for me. One of my friends works there. They don't just have coffee – they have some sandwiches and things like that, too. So it's a good place to grab a quick bite to eat.”

“It sounds lovely,” said Lucina as she passed through the door.

Robin closed the door and locked it behind her, dropping her keys into her pocket. “Yeah, plus I'm sure I could convince my friend to give us a discount. Sometimes there's even free samples if the manager isn't around, if you get my drift.”

A small smile formed on Lucina's face. “You have useful connections, then.”

Robin shrugged, matching Lucina's longer strides as they moved down the hallway and towards the stairwell. “I just have a lot of friends – wait, do you want to take the elevator?”

“Walking is fine.”

Robin grinned. “Walking it is, then.”

There was a bit of silence as they descended the stairs, only the slightly rhythmic but largely irregular sound of their footsteps breaking the quiet between them. Robin noted that Lucina seemed to move with a particular... *hurry* to her steps, even when just walking. It was like a perpetual sense of momentum and needing to be somewhere. Dimly, Robin worried that she was keeping Lucina from something important, but she shook it off. Lucina wouldn't have agreed or stuck around if she hadn't *wanted* to go.

“So, what about your friends? Any 'useful connections' there?” Robin asked.

“We're largely all working on the same project, I suppose you could say,” said Lucina. She pursed her lips.

“Sounds important,” said Robin vaguely, unsure of what else to say.

“It's...” Lucina trailed off as they reached the landing, and she pulled open the door. The pouring rain almost drowned out her later words. “An investigation.”

“Like police work?”

Robin walked through first and opened the umbrella. She hoisted it over her head and glanced back to Lucina. Lucina pulled up her hood and also joined her beneath the umbrella – a little hesitant, Robin noticed. This time, Lucina matched Robin's steps as they descended the rain-slick stoop and entered onto the sidewalk.

“It's somewhat like police work,” said Lucina. “...Have you ever heard of the Grimleal?”

Baffled, Robin shook her head. She looked up at Lucina, realizing for the first time at this closeness that Lucina was a few inches taller than her. Beyond Lucina, Robin could see the dark clouds looming over the buildings of Ylisstol. In this part of the city, it was more historic-looking buildings made out of brick to match some of the local landmarks, but even from here, she could see skyscrapers in the distance.

“They are a... doomsday cult, in a way. Reclusive people who believe in an imminent apocalypse,” said Lucina, frowning slightly. “Their fanaticism makes them dangerous. Where I'm from, they were also suspected of kidnapping people and brainwashing them into joining the cult as a whole.”

“And you're investigating them?” Robin whistled in awe. This made even meetings with her hardheaded boss look tame in comparison, and *he* had various nicknames like “the Conqueror”.

They stopped at a crosswalk. The rain drummed on the umbrella as several cars tore past them.

“They've been on the move as of late. Originally, they're from Plegia,” Lucina explained.

“Plegia? That's...” Robin frowned, unsure of what to say. “...a far way to go.”

Lucina nodded. “So they must have a reason for coming all this way. We're monitoring their movements in hopes of finding out that motive.”

The crosswalk sign flashed green, and they made their way across. Robin's feet splashed in a puddle as they stepped back onto the sidewalk on the other side. She glanced back to Lucina once they were off the road and passing by the bookstore that Robin recalled Sumia absolutely loved to visit.

“That's all serious, right? You're not just joking?” Robin clarified.

Lucina blinked in surprise, and she twisted a lock of hair between her fingers. “Ah, I suppose it does sound rather far-fetched... But it's the truth.”

Lucina hadn't given any indications of being anything but an honest person, even if there was something altogether *guarded* about her. Then again, the nature of her apparent job would explain some of that – didn't undercover cops always try to keep their identities from being found out? Lucina was just a step away from that. Robin nodded.

“I believe you. I just had to be sure.”

“You know, most wouldn't believe that there's a cult hiding in the city..?” Lucina wryly smiled.

“I believe you,” Robin said again. “Maybe it's one of my friends rubbing off on me. He's always so trusting of people, even complete strangers.”

“Oh?” Lucina followed Robin's pace as she turned the corner and headed down another street. “You did say we were all but friends after two conversations, though.”

Robin chuckled. “I did. You've got a better memory than me, I guess – even if you got my name wrong that time.”

Lucina's cheeks turned a little red. “It's Robin, right?”

“Right.” Robin playfully jabbed Lucina in the shoulder with her free hand. “See, you got it right this time.”

“Well, some of my friends were skeptical that I was going out with someone today. I had to give them a name so they would believe me.”

Lucina shrugged, but Robin snorted with laughter. She adjusted her grip on the umbrella.

“Your friends sound like mine. I tell them I've got plans for Saturday, and suddenly everyone's

accusing me of lying or making it up." Robin pitched her voice to mimic one of the most vocal disbelievers in her social group. "'Robin, your social life... It is like sad puppy with no home. How can pretty girl want spend time with you? Is absurd.'"

The impression made Lucina smile. "You know some very interesting people."

"Birds of a feather flock together and all that," Robin joked. She stopped in front of a small building with large glass windows. "Here we are."

She glanced up at the sign at the same time Lucina did. Dragon's Nest Café. The sign depicted a dragon roasting a cup of coffee with its fire breath. Sometimes Robin wondered if most of the reason Nowi got a job here was because of the draconic imagery. Having a manakete work at a dragon-themed location probably did wonders for its image. Still, Lucina didn't appear put off yet, so Robin tugged open the door for her. Nodding and murmuring a thank you, Lucina stepped into the building. As she lowered her hood, Robin followed in after her and closed the umbrella.

The café was warm compared to the rainy outdoors, and it smelled distinctly of coffee and warm bread. It wasn't too big, and, unsurprisingly, there weren't any other customers, or any sign that there had been any recently. Every chair was perfectly aligned with the tables. The checkered floor didn't have any splotches from rain or mud. Not a single napkin was out of place, and there wasn't any trash left behind on the tables.

"Robiiiiin!" Behind the counter, a stack of empty cups in the crook of her arm and leaning against her shoulder, Nowi stood on the tips of her toes and waved at her. A toothy grin split her face as she noticed Lucina. "I can't believe it! Man, Gregor owes me *big* time . "

"Owes..?" Robin repeated, a little bit of dread building in the pit of her stomach.

She glanced to Lucina to monitor her reaction, but her expression was merely one of mild curiosity – one brow raised, her gaze flicking between Robin and Nowi as she tried to figure out what was going on.

"Yeah! He was *so* sure you didn't have a date that he put money on it." Nowi looked to Lucina, her grin growing more and more mischievous as she started to talk. "Robin's a bit of a dork, but don't worry! She's good. You could probably sucker her into buying your meal, even–"

Robin felt her cheeks flush. "*Nowi.*"

Nowi looked at Robin with mock offense, raising her hands defensively. "What? It's true!"

Lucina held a hand to her mouth, but Robin could tell she was smiling. Robin let out an exasperated sigh and leaned the dripping umbrella against a chair near one of the windows. Lucina shrugged off her jacket and set it on the back of the chair across from Robin. The two of them approached the front of the café – as Lucina examined the menu with a scrutinizing gaze, Robin leaned across the counter and lowered her voice. Nowi, always delighted to hear something that had to be kept secret, also leaned forward, her long ears pricked to catch every word.

"So what're the odds that you can get us a discount today..?" Robin hazarded.

Nowi huffed, disappointed. "Is *that* why you came here?"

Robin weakly grinned and offered up a pleading look.

"Okay, but *just* because you're on a date. Don't expect this next time you come in here."

"Thanks, Nowi." Nowi stuck out her tongue and crossed her arms. Robin stood up straight and

glanced over at Lucina. “So, made up your mind?”

“Er...” Lucina looked back to the menu. “The, ah, 'Dragon's Nest Special' looks good, I suppose...”

“Alright.” Robin turned to Nowi. “One of those and a–”

The door burst open. All three of them whipped their gazes to where a soaking wet, blonde-haired man was panting in the doorway, leaning against the frame for support. His hair was stuck to his face, and his long yellow coat was dripping with rainwater. Robin was about to comment when Lucina hurried over to him.

“Owain, are you alright?” she asked, ushering him inside.

“You know him?” Robin managed, stunned.

“He's my cousin,” Lucina explained before turning back to Owain.

He gasped for breath and mumbled something that Robin didn't catch. Whatever it was, it made Lucina's blue eyes widen with worry. She stared at Owain, and he only nodded grimly, his jaw set. She stood up straighter and went to grab her jacket off the chair. Her wet shoes squeaked on the floor.

“Lucina?” Robin asked.

This made Lucina pause in the doorway, and she turned back to Robin. There was a beat, and she pulled on her jacket, fumbling a little with the zipper.

“I apologize,” Lucina said, bowing her head. “But... it pertains to what I mentioned on our way here. We may have found one of their hiding places. In a laundromat, of all places.”

“Ah, uh... yeah.” Robin nodded weakly. “We can catch up some other time..?”

Robin wasn't sure if it was relief on Lucina's face or not, but she got a responding nod all the same.

“Another time,” Lucina confirmed, and she pulled open the door.

The steady sound of rainfall filled the café. But even without an umbrella, Lucina just pulled up her hood and hurried out into the rain.

“Sorry to disrupt,” Owain called out over his shoulder, seeming genuinely remorseful about it. He rushed out behind Lucina, and the door shut behind them, leaving the café in silence once more save for the low rumble of rain outside.

Robin stood there at a loss, struggling to comprehend what exactly had happened here. One moment, she had been about to sit down for lunch with a girl, and now she was stuck alone in an empty café.

Finally, Nowi broke the silence:

“...Does this mean *I* owe Gregor money now?”

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